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ABSTRACT

Noting that literacy development is a social phenomenon, this book provides an account of the cultural conflicts and struggles experienced by two children from culturally different backgrounds and their teacher in a kindergarten program. The book is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter, "Introduction: History of the Struggle," introduces the research that explores the consequences of not working to understand and appreciate children's cultural backgrounds; this chapter also describes how these specific children, teacher, and kindergarten program were studied. The second chapter, "The Setting: Home and School Cultures," describes the children and their families, the teacher and her colleagues, and the kindergarten program within the school setting. The third chapter, "Isolation: Working and Playing with Others," portrays the children's unhappy social encounters in learning centers, whole-group lessons, and special classes. The fourth chapter, "Conflict and Struggle: Literacy Learning Program," outlines the components of the formal literacy learning program and the children's progress throughout the year. "Tinsel and Tension: Holidays and Celebrations," the fifth chapter, features classroom holidays and celebrations, and demonstrates the children's confusion with participating in unfamiliar rituals. The sixth chapter, "Confusion: Home and School Communication," depicts specific struggles of children, families, and educators when there is weak communication between home and school. The seventh chapter, "Classroom Community: Diversity and Literacy," considers the issues and principles derived from this study of cultural conflict and struggle and makes suggestions for classroom teachers and schools. "Epilogue: Teacher as Change Agent," the final chapter, is the story of the teacher's efforts during the year following the study to make positive changes in her classroom. Contains 191 references. (LPP)